

PART I - FACE SHEET

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction	
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to confirm to the Corporation's eGrants System)			
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS): 08/09/11	3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:	STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:	
2b. APPLICATION ID: 11CB131373	4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY: 08/09/11		
5. APPLICATION INFORMATION			
LEGAL NAME: River Network DUNS NUMBER: 805110202		NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes): NAME: Diana Toledo TELEPHONE NUMBER: (828) 258-2109 FAX NUMBER: INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: dtoledo@rivernetwork.org	
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 520 SW 6th Ave Ste 1130 Portland OR 97204 - 1511 County: Multnomah			
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 930969979		7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit 7b. National Non-Profit (Multi-State)	
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> A. AUGMENTATION B. BUDGET REVISION C. NO COST EXTENSION D. OTHER (specify below):		9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: Corporation for National and Community Service	
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER: 94.022 10b. TITLE: Nonprofit Capacity Building		11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: Capacity Building for Clean Water and Healthy Rivers	
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Michigan, Ohio and Washington, DC (Anacostia portion)		11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):	
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 10/01/11 END DATE: 09/30/13		14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="OR 001"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="OR 001"/>	
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: <input type="text" value="1"/>		16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS?	
a. FEDERAL	\$ 198,000.00	<input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON: DATE:	
b. APPLICANT	\$ 199,501.00		
c. STATE	\$ 0.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372	
d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00		
e. OTHER	\$ 0.00	17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00		
g. TOTAL	\$ 397,501.00		
18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.			
a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: Kevin Kasowski		b. TITLE:	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (503) 241-3506
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:			e. DATE SIGNED: 08/31/11

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Executive Summary

Name and location: River Network, 520 SW 6th Ave., #1130, Portland, OR 97204

Partners:

Alabama Rivers Alliance (Birmingham, AL): grassroots organizing, organizational development, support to start-ups, technical assistance on water policy

Freshwater Future (Petoskey, MI): organizational development support (e.g. communication, networking, fundraising), technical assistance on watershed protection and restoration topics

Gulf Restoration Network (New Orleans, LA): communications and outreach tools, grassroots organizing and fundraising, building effective partnerships and coalitions, science-based programming.

Program Summary: River Network and more than a dozen state and regional capacity building organizations are part of the Watershed Support Network (WSN) which has helped build a nationwide movement of nearly 2,000 state and local non-profit groups working to protect and restore our most valuable resource -- water.

This proposal engages three WSN Partner organizations in working with our staff and contractors to provide capacity building assistance to 15-20 small or mid-sized watershed groups in hardship communities in five states and the District of Columbia.

We will establish performance based management systems to enable each group to track progress as we provide in-person and webinar trainings on volunteer recruitment, fundraising, board development,

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strategic planning; a peer learning network; participation in our annual National River Rally; and additional services (web resources, newsletters, list serv, etc.).

Geographic area(s) or communities you are proposing to serve: Gulf states (LA, AL, MS), Great Lakes (OH, MI) and DC's Anacostia River.

We will provide intensive capacity-building support to 15-20 groups and will support 20-30 additional NGOs by including them in webinars and teleconferences.

Grant Amount Requested: \$202,396

Program Design

Rivers and watersheds in and around low-income communities are impacted by the highest levels of pollution found anywhere in the U.S. They are compromised landscapes, often with limited access points behind auto repair shops and factories. Often there is little in the way of natural systems to protect, and much to restore, which is resource-intensive.

Political and socioeconomic challenges found in disadvantaged communities are also at play. Polluters benefit from the communities' lack of scientific knowledge and political clout. Agencies are faced with severe budget cuts. NGOs lack the internal systems, financial resources and organizing skills necessary to be effective.

We selected the Gulf States of Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama because they have some of the highest poverty rates in the U.S. As per the 2008 Census, they rank #1, #2 and #9 in the number of individuals living below the federal poverty level. NGOs in those states also have far fewer philanthropic resources to draw from and more limited access to capacity-building support than most other states.

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Coastal communities must now also address the long-term impacts of last year's tragic Gulf oil spill.

The Great Lakes states of Ohio and Michigan, particularly in or near urban areas, also face major socioeconomic challenges and legacies of toxic pollution. They have been hard-hit by the recession in both home foreclosure rates (MI #4, Ohio #9, RealtyTrac, 2011) and unemployment (MI #6, OH #21, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011).

We also focus on the Anacostia watershed in Washington DC due to the high poverty rate (ranked #5 compared to the 50 states, Census Bureau 2008) and its importance to the quality of the Chesapeake Bay, our nation's most threatened estuary.

River Network has a long track record of providing capacity building assistance in these regions and a significant foundation, including strong state and regional training partners, on which we can build.

We will work with state and regional partners and Corporation staff to establish a competitive Request for Assistance (RFA) process to select 15-20 local groups that will receive long-term capacity-building assistance to develop and implement performance management systems and increase their organizational sustainability. This process will incorporate the Corporation's hardship criteria and additional criteria:

Organizational Size: Based on our 20+ years' experience, we know small to mid-size groups in our sector tend to have smaller budgets and staff sizes than other NGOs.

Organizational Systems & Training Needs: Prospective participants will complete an online Organizational Assessment Survey so we can understand their strengths, weaknesses and training

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needs. Selected NGOs will demonstrate a basic understanding of the value of outcomes-based approaches to program planning and evaluation.

Commitment to Organizational Effectiveness: Board and staff of target NGOs will be committed to increasing organizational sustainability and open to changing practices and participating in trainings.

Projects and Activities: Each participant's current and planned projects and activities will demonstrate a solid track record of effective programs that respond to community and watershed needs.

Potential Long-Term Success: Answers to the above questions dictate the potential for long-term success, but we will also consider number of volunteers, caliber of leadership, public sector involvement, and funding potential.

We plan to select 15-20 watershed organizations after distributing the RFA to hundreds of groups in our National Directory of Watershed Organizations that are active in the target states. We will also distribute the RFA to groups that have received past support from us or our WSN partners. Based on our capacity building experience over 20+ years, we are defining small organizations as all-volunteer groups with budgets less than \$100,000, and medium-sized groups as having 1-4 paid positions with budgets up to \$500,000.

o Corporation Priority

We will provide services to NGOs that align with the Corporation's Environmental Stewardship priority and have watershed protection and restoration as their primary focus.

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Philosophy, Goals and Approach

Creating a Partnership: First and foremost, we work directly with local NGOs to understand what they want and truly need. Following completion of an online Organizational Assessment Survey (OAS), a point person conducts a site assessment to build trust and discuss needs in greater detail.

Tactical and Targeted Assistance: We create an individualized Organizational & Technical Assistance Plan (OTAP) to address capacity-building needs and specific aspects of developing and implementing performance management systems. The plans may also include help in volunteer recruitment, fundraising, financial planning, community-outreach and board development.

Building a Learning Environment: We establish learning communities where project participants gain access to existing tools, manuals, and resources, and most importantly, other nonprofit leaders.

Our Organizational Assessment Survey is the result of 20+ years of experience in assessing and developing the capacity of watershed NGOs. It assists in identifying priority organizational development needs, assesses groups' technical capacity to engage and support outcomes-based programs, and gauges groups' progress in building capacity over time. It includes a Status Report that captures quantitative data about programs and organizational structures, and an Internal Assessment that assesses strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of multiple people within the organization, as well as Indicators of Organizational Strength, Best Management Practices, Community Involvement Measures, and Indicators of Watershed Participation.

The tool has been used by hundreds of watershed groups, providing River Network with a wealth of information to explore the correlation between organizational best practices and on-the-ground

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outcomes, and to compare a group's performance with that of similar NGOs.

Timeline

Oct-Dec 2011: Establish criteria for selecting NGOs; prepare and disseminate RFA broadly to NGOs in target areas

Jan 2012: Assistance Applications and Organizational Assessment Surveys due

Feb-Mar 2012: Convene review panel to identify semi-finalists. Conduct in-depth evaluation of semi-finalists as needed.

Apr 2012: Submit Progress Reports through eGrants.

Apr-May 2012: 15-20 selected organizations announced; project team meets with groups individually to draft OTAPs

May 2012: Launch of Learning Community. Initial day-long, orientation meeting and baseline training to coincide with our National River Rally (Portland, OR).

May-June 2012: Complete OTAPs, sign Memoranda of Agreement with each organization and form Assistance Teams to deliver services

July '12- July '13: Assistance Teams deliver support services to participants, including in-person and online trainings and consultation.

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(RFA applicants not selected to receive intensive support and other watershed groups requesting capacity-building assistance in target states/regions will be invited to participate in quarterly Learning Community activities and group webinars/trainings.)

Oct 2012: Submit Progress Reports through eGrants

Dec 2012-Jan 2013: Collect mid-term data at least 6 months following organizations' receipt of services to assess follow-up needs

Apr 2013: Submit Progress Reports through eGrants

July-Aug 2013: Capacity-building services completed. Collect "end-of-project" data. Use in-person meetings to collect qualitative information and develop 2-4 narrative Case Studies to guide and inform future efforts

Aug-Sept 2013: Evaluate project results, including organizational, community and environmental results

Oct 2013: Submit final reports through eGrants.

Communications Plan

Direct, one-on-one assistance is the most productive way to address an NGO's needs and to deliver solutions for growing its capacity. We establish and maintain a working relationship with a group's leadership team - board members and senior staff - through all project phases, including assessing

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needs, delivering training and consulting services and tracking progress on the implementation of new systems and processes. Our website, publications and other materials augment our one-on-one assistance. We will also use an online group communication platform (e.g. Basecamp, Groupsite or other) to facilitate peer communications of the Learning Community.

Capacity Building Assistance Plan

With our state and regional level partners, we will work with each local project participant to determine their needs and to provide each with 40-80 hours of capacity building assistance over an 18-month period to achieve the following outputs:

1) Develop and implement performance management systems that link an organization's mission, performance and on-the-ground impact and that identify and collect information to guide internal decisions about how resources are deployed. Such systems may include one or more of the following tools:

a. Organizational Impact Maps that articulate desired outcomes, identify conditions needed to achieve them, create programs to create those conditions and establish indicators to track progress. Such maps would be developed by working directly and in-person with the NGO's Board.

b. Outcome-based Strategic Plans that articulate organization and program goals and objectives and define measurable, time-bound benchmarks to assess progress. Strategic Plans would be developed over a 3-6 month period through in-person meetings and calls with Board and staff and could also include soliciting stakeholder input through surveys and interviews.

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c. Evaluation systems to assess program effectiveness, progress toward outcomes, and ways to improve performance. Evaluation systems would be created in conjunction with staff, with input from technical experts and Board leaders.

d. Financial management systems to track income sources would be developed with key staff (i.e. the Executive Director and Financial Manager) and members of the relevant Board committees and officers (i.e. Treasurer).

e. Performance evaluation systems for staff, Board and volunteers that are linked to organizational progress toward desired outcomes. These would be developed with key staff (i.e. the Executive Director and Program Managers) and members of relevant Board committees such as the Personnel Committee.

f. Outcome-based Project Plans for on-the-ground watershed conservation, restoration, and community engagement initiatives. Such plans would be developed by the Executive Director and Program Managers, with input from technical experts and select Board members.

2) Provide assistance to help build organizational capacity in other areas listed below, including facilitation of Board/staff discussions, meetings and retreats; issue-focused trainings delivered in person or via webinars; assistance with the development of work plans either in-person or using phone and email communications; and by providing relevant templates, case studies and guides to organizational best practices. The issue areas include:

- a. Board effectiveness and leadership development;
- b. Board and/or staff fiscal management;
- c. Volunteer recruitment, management and retention;

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- d. Building effective partnerships and collaboratives;
- e. Financial planning and tax compliance;
- f. Effective community outreach and increased diversity
- g. Broader-based and more inclusive watershed protection efforts

Staffing and Partnerships

Our organizational capacity includes field staff in western North Carolina and the Eastern Shore of Maryland that are well positioned to provide direct assistance along the Gulf Coast and in the Chesapeake Bay region. We will also work with an experienced capacity building contractor based in Ohio who is already working with local groups in that state and in Michigan.

In addition, we will engage one or more of our regional and state-based WSN training partners, depending on the geographic location of the local organizations selected to receive assistance.

These organizations and their potential roles include:

- * Alabama Rivers Alliance (Birmingham, AL): provide group trainings or direct assistance on grassroots organizing and organizational development, and technical assistance on water policy initiatives
- * Freshwater Future (Petoskey, MI): support efforts to improve organizational communication, networking, and fundraising; provide technical support on watershed protection and restoration
- * Gulf Restoration Network (New Orleans, LA): provide 1:1 assistance to improve organizational communications and outreach, coach and mentor groups in grassroots organizing and fundraising

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activities and assist in building effective partnerships and coalitions

Organizational Capability

River Network's mission is to empower and unite people and communities to protect and restore rivers and other waters that sustain the health of our country. Founded in 1988, we lead a national watershed protection movement of nearly 2,000 state, regional and local NGOs, including more than 500 dues-paying "Partner" organizations. In two decades, we have created hundreds of state and local groups; assisted tens of thousands of leaders grappling with water-related issues; worked with tribes to form the Indigenous Waters Network, and established the annual National River Rally as the premier gathering for people working for watershed protection. Our 17-person staff is based in Portland, OR, with field staff in Vermont, Maryland, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Utah and Idaho.

We are unique among national environmental organizations in that we focus all our work on helping regional, state and local partners establish more effective programs via capacity building, technical and networking assistance.

In particular, we have a long and successful track record of working with disadvantaged communities. In 1997, we initiated our "Healthy Waters, Healthy Communities" Program to empower grassroots NGOs in disadvantaged communities with technical and organizational assistance to help them understand, investigate and take action to address water pollution that poses a threat to human health. From the colonias on the U.S.-Mexico border and the pueblos of New Mexico to the Abenaki nation in Vermont and native villagers along the Yukon, we have helped groups understand relevant science, positively influence policy and take action to address serious environmental health problems. Our combined efforts have resulted in new state laws to address mercury contamination, major improvements in industry facility design and operation, and new commitments to site remediation in communities that (wrongly) were deemed "clean."

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River Network also created the Watershed Support Network (WSN) in 2003. The WSN is a professional community of more than a dozen regional and state-level NGOs dedicated to helping local groups build their organizational capacity and their ability to protect water resources. Our WSN training partners team with us to provide direct 1:1 training and support for local groups. In 2010, we conducted a thorough analysis of our impact. Data from 210 local groups throughout the U.S. revealed that the average budget grew by \$19,000. While not all groups saw larger budgets, more of them saw their budgets grow than shrink, even during challenging economic times. Groups also diversified revenue streams, e.g., government funding decreased from 62% of revenue to 52%, while revenue from membership dues and corporate funding more than doubled. Average number of donors increased from 95 to 118 per group (a 25% increase) and average membership increased by 21%.

Most importantly, our research indicated that stronger, healthier organizations were more effective in protecting rivers and watersheds. They had more "on-the-ground" activities and in-stream outcomes, including river clean-ups engaging hundreds of community volunteers, safer water to swim in and to drink, and improved watershed ecosystems (see below).

Percentage of groups assisted reporting:

Changed public attitudes 75%

Improved individual behaviors 88%

Reduced waste water discharges 25%

Greater protection of pristine waters 25%

Better restoration projects 38%

Water safer for swimming 25%

Water safer for drinking 38%

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Fewer people exposed to risk 25%

Improved decontamination 25%

Our research and final report to EPA (available on request) also included several detailed case studies. For example, in 2005, we helped the Bad River Watershed Association in Wisconsin develop and implement a fundraising plan. Too reliant on a few grants, it began soliciting individual gifts, despite the fact that much of the area's population is poor; within a year donations had begun to flow. BRWA leaders also looked for guidance from us as they hired their first executive director and began to install professional systems. The group soon acquired a reputation for solid technical work and in 2008, they hired a volunteer coordinator and water quality technician. By 2010, BRWA netted the first grants from foundations and contracts for services from local governments and tribal entities. With grant support from River Network, BRWA implemented a new donor, member, and volunteer database. Recently, the Executive Director raised individual gifts from the Board of Directors to jump-start a new fundraising initiative. Today BRWA has a diverse fundraising plan with income from a number of sustainable sources.

Looking forward, capacity building remains the first of four goals in River Network's 2015 strategic plan (which includes detailed benchmarks and measurable outcomes for every element of our work). In 2011, we secured EPA funding to launch an Urban Waters capacity building program in five cities (Seattle, Grand Rapids, Buffalo, Birmingham and Atlanta). (While we recognize we can't count that support as matching funds, we will certainly use it leverage Corporation funding in Alabama and Michigan.)

Key staff and contractors involved in this project are:

Mary Ellen Olcese joined River Network as the Mid-Atlantic Program Manager in January 2008. She

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brings to the position 20+ years of experience working with NGOs as an Education Director, Development Director and Executive Director. Since 2001 she worked as an independent consultant for community and conservation groups on issues of fundraising and institutional effectiveness. She supports river and watershed groups in the Mid-Atlantic region with special focus on the Chesapeake Bay. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a Masters from Boston University.

Diana Toledo joined River Network in 2006 as our Southeast Program Manager and brings 15+ years' experience building the capacity of community-based nonprofit organizations. She provides training, consulting and facilitation services to watershed organizations and coalitions across the Southeast. Her areas of focus include strategic planning, project planning, fundraising and coalition-building. She received a Masters' degree in Water Resources Management from the University of Wisconsin.

Francisco (Paco) Ollervides is an independent consultant with a record of domestic and international accomplishments in natural resources protection and conservation, grassroots organizing, research, and advocacy. He works to strengthen and expand the constituency and services of River Network in the Great Lakes region. He previously served as Senior Field Coordinator for the Waterkeeper Alliance and, prior to that, as Director for the Center for Coastal Studies in San Carlos, Mexico. He is based in central Ohio.

Our fiscal year ends September 30. Our audited financial statements as of 9/30/2010 show the following Net Asset breakdown:

Unrestricted 180,688

Temporarily Restricted 841,717

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Total 1,022,405

Under GAAP rules, Net Assets do not reflect Government Grants which are billed on a reimbursement basis since they are not receivables until the work is performed.

This grant request would represent approximately 20% of our Net Assets. We do not expect a substantial change to our Net Assets as of 9/30/2011.

Organizational Systems, Structure and Support Staff

River Network is governed by a diverse board of 16 volunteer trustees from throughout the U.S. and led by our President Todd Ambbs who serves as chief executive officer. In addition to Mary Ellen Olcese and Diana Toledo, other staffing resources contributing to this project from our Portland headquarters include our Partnership Program Manager and our National River Rally coordinator. Our support staff includes 1.2 FTE in finance and grants management, 1.4 FTE in office management and IT and 2.5 FTE in fundraising.

River Network has an annual peer-based staff evaluation process (including board review of the President and of itself) based on work plans and goals identified by staff and managers.

We manage all restricted funds carefully and in compliance with OMB Circulars A-110 and A-122. We have a Federal negotiated indirect cost rate with the EPA as our cognizant agency. (We realize CNCS funds are subject to different statutory limits on indirect costs, but provide that information to demonstrate that we have federally approved controls in place.) In 2008 we were randomly selected for audit by the EPA grants office, and no expenditures were challenged, and our current policies and

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procedures were fully approved after the process was completed.

In the past two years, we have invested significantly in creating a centralized CRM database that enables us to track communications across programs and with state and local partners, while housing current and historical data on capacity building efforts.

Our communications infrastructure includes two monthly e-newsletters, our website, various list serves and a detailed annual report.

We have adopted a "Donor Bill of Rights" that provides transparency to all of our donors regarding our fundraising procedures.

Finally, as a national organization, we have a strong IT network to facilitate communication both among our six field staff and our headquarters, as well as with our Partner groups throughout the U.S.

Grants Management Capacity

River Network has administered 2 EPA awards in the last five years of similar size, scope and relevance: AWPPG award #83339401 for the National Initiative for Watershed Training, (3/1/07 - 9/30/08); and the OWOW Targeted Watershed Capacity-Building Grant award #83371201 for the National Watershed Support Network (10/1/07 - 3/31/10) with a total project cost of \$720,951. Both projects were successfully completed and all reporting requirements are met. We are currently administering a three-year \$600,000 EPA Urban Waters capacity building grant as noted above.

With oversight from our program staff, our Finance Manager and Staff Accountant have primary

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responsibility for grant management and accounting. Last year's annual audit yielded no management letter findings.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

The overall budget for this project is \$404,792 over two years including a 1:1 match (detailed below) of funding requested from the Corporation. River Network will serve as grant recipient and will be solely responsible for managing project funding. Principal project expenses include approximately 1.25 fte in River Network staff support over two years, with fringe and payroll taxes at 32.5%, travel (staff travel estimated at two trips per group, with five groups requiring air travel; additional travel dollars are for participant travel to our River Rally) and training-related expenses (participant registration at River Rally and costs related to participation in webinars and receipt of Partnership services such as printed newsletters, etc.). Our budget also includes nearly \$150,000 over two years in contract support: \$40,000 for work in OH and MI; \$78,500 to be allocated to training partners, as appropriate, once project participants are selected, and \$30,000 over two years in direct financial support to local groups to help them meet project goals and improve organizational effectiveness and performance. (Per the RFP, we will seek approval by the Corporation before approving such expenditures.) Indirect costs are calculated at 6% as per the Corporation's limit.

Matching Funds

Matching funds will be provided in large part (estimated \$128,000 at this point in time) by grants we have received from the C.S. Mott Foundation, the Keith Campbell Foundation and the Park Foundation. We will also commit \$73,896 in our own general support funds. If our proposal is selected for further review, we will work with Corporation staff to develop an updated projection of grant funds that will be remaining as of August 31.

Clarification Summary

Budget Clarifications

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1E. Supplies: We track supplies in two line items: 1) the proportionate share of general office supplies based on FTE's of staff effort across all departments, and 2) supplies specific to program work (e.g., training materials for a site visit or group training. This budget line covers both of our lines.

1F. Contractual and Consultant Services: Software to support new systems (e.g. member tracking or financial mgmt.) Avg. of \$1,500-\$2,000/group, subject to CNCS approval

1G. Training: Our annual National River Rally is a four-day, three-night event. The total budget for the 2012 River Rally is \$581,869, of which \$312,000 is for lodging and meals (as per our contract with the host hotel). Our per-person cost is about \$1,000; since that is prohibitive for smaller non-profits, we solicit sponsorships to cut registration to \$850. We also typically secure \$100,000 in scholarships to reduce the fee by an average of \$300 for needy participants. Since our project will serve communities at or just above the poverty level, we request full scholarships for 17 project participants each year (34 over 2 years).

1i: Other Support Costs: The input form allowed only one year amounts; the "2 years" was simply to note these amounts are for two years.

Program Clarifications

1. Track Record in Service Areas: Our capacity building work with nonprofits in the Great Lakes, Gulf Coast and Chesapeake Bay regions dates to 1993, when we helped found state-level river groups in Wisconsin, Alabama and other states. In 1994, we opened a Washington D.C. office to provide capacity building assistance in the Chesapeake region. In 1999, we hosted our first annual National River Rally,

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which has since provided a multi-day training for several thousand watershed leaders, including many from the three regions. In 2003, we created the Watershed Support Network (WSN), a professional community of regional and state-level NGOs (including groups in Alabama, Louisiana, Ohio and Michigan) dedicated to helping local groups build their capacity. In 2006, we opened a Southeastern U.S. office in Asheville, NC to increase capacity building work in that region, including the Gulf Coast.

2. Organizational Assessment Tool: We developed this tool in 2003 with input from all WSN trainers and other capacity-building professionals. Since 2003, it's been refined to also quantify environmental and social outcomes. We have used the tool with 400+ organizations, allowing us to identify trends, assess changes in capacity, and draw conclusions about the impact of specific capacity-building efforts. In 2010, our organizational assessment tool was featured by the EPA in a nationally broadcast webinar. Portions of it have been adopted by other NGOs and training organizations in the Environmental Capacity-Building Network. We have also contracted with the Chesapeake Bay Trust to refine our tool so they can use it to guide funding decisions.

3. Project Team: Diana Toledo and Mary Ellen Olcese, River Network staff, and Francisco Ollervides, a consultant, will work together to develop all shared tools (e.g. OTAP templates) and ensure the seamless and consistent implementation of this project across the three geographic areas.

4. Staff-Contractor-Partner Relationship and Interaction: Each project participant will receive services from an Assistance Team made up of one of the above individuals and one or more of the training partners identified in the proposal, depending on their particular training needs. We will coordinate service delivery through monthly calls of each Assistance Team and of the Project Team and will use an online project management tool (i.e. Basecamp) to conduct team communications and track project tasks. All staff, contractors and training partners will attend a planning meeting at our River Rally.

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5. Program Experience: We have designed, implemented and managed 3 programs of similar or greater size and scope. From 1999-2005, we coordinated the national Watershed Assistance Grants (WAG) program, benefiting 95 watershed partnerships from 43 states, with a preference to groups with budgets of less than \$200,000. Our staff also provided training assistance and consultation to awardees.

Via the Watershed Support Network, trainers in 9 mid-sized watershed organizations helped our staff provide capacity-building assistance to more than 900 local watershed groups, including those in all of the states targeted under this grant. On average, groups we assisted most intensively saw: 1) membership increases of 45%, 2) donor base increases of 125%, 3) overall budgets went up by 20% (primarily with private not public funds) and 4) a 10-25% increase in the use of organizational Best Management Practices.

In early 2010, we partnered with Groundwork USA to design a third major capacity building initiative (Urban Waters restoration) which combines organizational development training from RN and GW with a competitive regrant program to participants. We have selected 5 community groups as lead participants, and will serve a dozen more at a less intensive level. We met with group leaders at our River Rally to assess needs and will be making regrants and beginning direct training soon. The Urban Waters program design parallels the design of our proposal to CNCS in many ways, and we hope to leverage resources across both programs.

6. Partner Involvement and Roles: We expect to focus on the 3 regions as follows: 40% in OH and MI, 40% in the three Gulf States, and 20% in the Washington DC area. This is only an estimate subject to the selection of recipient groups. We expect each of the three partner organizations will work directly with 5-8 groups, providing expertise on issues unique to their regions and assisting with the development of outcomes-based project and strategic plans and program evaluation tools, as well as grassroots fundraising & financial management, effective use of social networking tools and coalition-building.

Required Documents

Document Name

Status